ERIC Document Resume	See Instruction Sheet	DATE OF RESUME	DATE RECEIVED

A. PUBLICATION DATA

1. ERIC NUMBER	2. ORIGINATOR CONTROL NO(S).	3. IDENTIFICATION NO.
ED001901	NA	NA

DO NOT WRITE IN SPACE BELOW

4. AUTHOR(S):
Smilansky, S.

5. TITLE OF DOCUMENT ABSTRACTED: An Experiment to Promote Cognitive Abilities, Impart Basic Informaton and Modify Attitudes of Pre-School Culturally Disadvantaged Children, Through the Development and Improvement of Their Socio-Dramatic Free Play

6. PUBLICATION TITLE:
NA

MICROFILM COPY AVAILABLE
YES ☒ NO ☐

COPYRIGHT GRANTED
YES ☐ NO ☒

COPYRIGHT RELEASE FILED
YES ☐ NO ☐

TYPE OF REPORT
PROPOSAL ☐
IN-PROGRESS ☒
FINAL ☐
FOLLOW-UP ☐

7. EDITOR(S):
NA

8. PLACE OF ORIGIN
ORG. American Orthopsychiatric Association
ST. New York, New York
CITY, STATE

9. PUBLISHER OR SOURCE
American Orthopsychiatric Association
New York, New York

10. VOL.	11. PAGES	12. MO./YR.	13. TOTAL PP.
NA	NA	3./65	36

TELE. EXT.
INST/LOC CODE

OTHER ERIC REFERENCES:

ERIC SATELLITE CODE

B. INDEXING DATA

14. SUBJECT AREA

15. TYPE OF ENDEAVOR
research

16. INDEXING TERMS (6-12)

cognitive abilities	socio-dramatic free play	emotional disturbances		
preschool children	teachers' role	socio-cultural factors	attitudes	
scholastic failure	lack of concentration	parent-child interaction		
culturally disadvantaged	attention span	nursery school parents'	attitudes	

17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Two main methods of approach in understanding the scholastic failure of culturally disadvantaged children were: the use of such teaching methods as textbooks, workbooks, teachers' guidebooks, and other teaching aids suited to the special needs of these children, and the use of experiments on the kindergarten level aimed at finding ways to develop the necessary abilities and to impart the required information to these children in an effort to boost scholastic capability and minimize early school failure. This was called a planned program of development in the kindergarten.

The basic problem in working with children from underpriviledged homes was the rapidity with which they shift from one line of thought to another, from one activity to another, and from one feeling to another. Thus ways and means that would help the child embody those scattered facts, experiences, and words into new, meaningful concepts were sought. Socio-dramatic play was the best and most natural instrument for helping preschool children combine their scattered experiences, facts, and concepts; socio-dramatic play was a form of social play activity participated in by some preschool children.

Results showed that the growth and development of a child from the middle higher socio-cultural stratum differed in many respects from that of a child from the lower socio-cultural stratum. The difference stemmed mainly from the quality of the interaction between parent and child; thus it was assumed that deprivation in this area could be recognized and partly overcome in the nursery and kindergarten.

ERIC No.

18. SOURCE OF ABSTRACT

C. FUNDING DATA

19. SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	20. DIVISION OR DEPT.	21. CONTRACT NO. / PROJECT NO.
	22. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT	
	23. DURATION OF PROJECT	U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Office of Education

ED001901

F 15

AN EXPERIMENT TO PROMOTE COGNITIVE ABILITIES, IMPART BASIC INFORMATION AND MODIFY ATTITUDES OF PRE-SCHOOL CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN, THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF THEIR SOCIO-DRAMATIC FREE PLAY.

A lecture presented by Dr. S. Smilansky at the annual meeting of the American Orthopsychiatric Association, New York, March, 1965.

I am grateful for the opportunity to attend the conference, and share with you our thinking and experiences in the education and promotion of the culturally deprived in Israel.

May I apologize for my English pronounciation, as I am the culturally deprived in this group.

As time does not allow me to describe in detail the theoretical formulations, practical developments and implications of this study, I had to face the choice between a detailed presentation of one aspect only or an outline of the whole study. After consultation we decided to use the time allowance this afternoon for presenting different stages of this study and supplement it with a table of contents of a monograph which will appear during the coming months.

I. INTRODUCTION.

For the past four years the Szold Foundation for Child and Youth Welfare Research in Israel has applied itself to experiments to further the development of children, from socio-culturally underprivileged strata, attending nursery schools and kindergardens.

REPRINTED BY PERMISSION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN PRINTED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

These children - most of them children of immigrants from various Middle Eastern and North African countries - are not prepared to cope with the demands of the school curriculum and consequently tend to fail in their studies. A number of diagnostic studies carried out in Israel, revealed that this process of failure begins, apparently, in the first grade of elementary school and constitutes an ever-widening scholastic gap between these children and those whose parents came from culturally advanced countries. Our studies on the subject (3) showed that this scholastic failure has far-reaching effects on the emotional and social state of the children. Children who had failed scholastically during their first year at school were shown to have undergone a marked deterioration in such traits as initiative, power of concentration, attitude to work and studies, etc. Many of the children, moreover, who failed in school showed symptoms of slight emotional disturbance - a phenomenon which is a clear warning of future undesirable developments.

Scholastic failure was also shown to constitute a severe blow to the parents who are, for the most part, anxious for their children to achieve scholastic success since this is regarded as a guarantee of future social and economic advancement. These parents frequently blame themselves for lacking the ability to help their child take advantage of the school and the opportunities

it offers to the successful scholar; consequently they blame the child and this leads to serious disturbances in family life.

The prevalence of scholastic failure among children whose parents came from various Middle Eastern and North African countries is especially grave since such children constitute a majority (60%) in the primary grades of the school system. It is imperative, therefore, to seek ways of developing the skills and abilities of the children in order to enable them through successful studies, to fully integrate into the occupational, economic and social life of Israel.

We have concentrated on two main methods of approach to this problem. On the one hand various studies were launched which concentrated on the elementary school children and special teaching methods were sought; textbooks, workbooks, teacher's guide-books and other teaching aids were evolved suited to the special needs of these children. On the other hand experiments were undertaken on the kindergarten level aimed at finding ways to develop the necessary abilities and impart the required information to the children in an effort to boost scholastic capability and minimize the above noted early school failure. These experiments were based on the assumption that a planned programme of development in the kindergarden can ensure the child's success in the primary grades. The present study is one from many different approaches we experimented to further the development of children from culturally disadvantaged families.

2. THE PROBLEM

One of the most striking things in the behaviour of pre-school children from underprivileged homes is the rapidity with which they shift from one line of thought to another, from one activity to another and from one feeling to another.

It is our assumption that this behaviour, characteristic of the underprivileged children under our observations, stems mainly from a discontinuity in their chain of concepts, or, more exactly, from the separateness of their concepts. It appears that the dynamic process of molding concepts into new forms does not occur.

On the basis of our observations of child rearing practices in the homes of children from different socio-cultural backgrounds our explanation for the difference found, in this respect, between the behaviour of "privileged" children and "underprivileged" children is the result of direct environmental influence. The "privileged" children are taught by the adults in their immediate environment how to collect scattered facts and weave them together into new concepts from a very early age, whereas, the "underprivileged" children are not so taught.

The approach, now widely held in Israel and abroad, that the problem is to supplement more and more facts, concepts and vocabulary, assuming that if we find means and methods that will

help the child to acquire them, the rest will come "naturally" does not seem right. It is our opinion that such an approach may impede the progress of these children, for it simply duplicates the home environment situation by adding <u>separate</u> facts, experiences, words, etc. The problem, as we see it, is to search for ways and means which will help the child embody those scattered facts, experiences, words and so on, already in his grasp into <u>new</u>, meaningful concepts. We are not overlooking the need for adding supplementary material but, it is our opinion that this new material will be better understood and remembered if the child is taught how to combine it and integrate it and thereby produce new concepts.

Socio-dramatic play seemed to us one of the best and most natural instruments for helping pre-school children to combine their scattered experiences, facts and concepts into new, meangful concepts. We therefore decided to encourage socio-dramatic play with our experimental groups and compare the results with the control groups. We were astonished to learn that the children from the low socio-cultural strata <u>play very little</u> and most of them <u>do not participate in socio-dramatic play at all</u>. This fact became apparent when we studied the socio-dramatic play behaviour of the two groups.

From this point our problem ceased to be, 'How to use socio-dramatic play as a means to further the development of underprivileged children' and became instead an experimental research project designed to teach us:

a) The differences in the socio-dramatic play behaviour between children from lower socio-cultural backgrounds (in our case children of parents from Middle Eastern and North African countries,) and children from middle and higher socio-cultural backgrounds (children of parents from European countries).

b) The possible reasons for these differences.

c) How can we develop the ability for socio-dramatic play in the underprivileged children.

c) How socio-dramatic play can be used as a means for developing underprivileged children.

3. DEFINITION OF SOCIO-DRAMATIC PLAY.

Since the term socio-dramatic play lends itself to various interpretations, we shall give here an exact definition of what we mean to convey when we use it.

We base our definition on our observations of the play behaviour of kindergarden children with middle and high socio-cultural backgrounds. Our observations accord with the conclusions of Buhler, Valentine, Isaacs and Piaget in that we found that the majority of these children participate in socio-dramatic play from the age of three years and up.

Socio-dramatic play, as we shall refer to it in this study, is a form of social play activity participated in by pre-school children. It is not organized by an adult but an adult may be present and may even intervene at the request of the participants or in the case of a violent quarrel. In this social play activity not less than two children engage, both undertake roles and spontaneously act out a theme. The game is played partly or wholly as "make-believe." Toys and other play objects are used flexibly and freely and sometimes symbolically as means to interpret the theme. The players verbalize as they act. The game is sustained over a sufficient period of time to enable the players to become involved in their interaction, thus realizing the theme.

To put the matter negatively, we do not consider socio-dramatic play to have taken place unless the following five factors are present:

a) There are <u>at least</u> two players in some interaction, guided by a theme to which they commonly give some expression.

b) The theme takes the children into some aspects of "make-believe" during the play episode.

c) Toys and/or other properties are used as instruments to further the expression and interpretation of the theme.

d) The play episode continues long enough to involve the children in the formation of their theme.

e) There is some verbal communication between the players within the framework of the chosen play episode.

It is clear, therefore, that when we observe a little girl all dressed-up as a 'lady' with shopping basket in hand, who announces, to no-one in particular, "Pretend that I'm Mummy and I'm going shopping," we would not define this enactment as socio-dramatic play. In this instance factor (a) is lacking, there has been no interaction; no common enterprise with another child.

4. OUTSTANDING DIFFERENCES IN SOCIO-DRAMATIC PLAY.

In order to learn about socio-dramatic play, and the main lines of play which are outstanding in socio-dramatic play among children from low socio-cultural strata, we made a series of observations of children's games in nursery schools and kindergardens where the children were drawn from middle and upper socio-cultural strata. In each kindergarden we wrote reports, as exact and as detailed as possible, on the content, form and process of the play.

The observations were made in 26 classes were the ages of children ranged from 3 through 6 years. In 13 of these classes the children were from middle and upper socio-cultural background and in the other 13 classes the children were from a low socio-cultural background, children of immigrants from Middle Eastern Countries.

How were the observations made?

The field workers noted with as much detail and accuracy as possible the content of play; the form and process of play; the number of children participating; the toys, tools or other objects used; the length of time consumed and the verbalizations of the children, word for word.

In both sets of nursery schools and kindergardens the observations were concentrated on the same centres of interest; and at least ten examples were reported from each centre of interest in the H set of classes and the same number in the L set.

The recorded material thus acquired reveals conspicuous differences in the socio-dramatic play of the H children compared with that of the L children. Differences in character and content of play which we analysed quantitively, and differences which may be impressed on the observer but which cannot be quantitively articulated within the sampled material.

In the H nurseries and kindergarden there are many socio-dramatic games within any given hour than in the L nurseries and kindergardens. The general impression in the H classes is of many small groups comprising from 2 - 6 children, each group involved in a lively game. It is difficult for the observer to decide what to note, he has to choose one group from the many playing simultaneously. In contrast, the L class has only one or two socio-dramatic games going at any given time. The observer settles near the centre of interest

but has hardly managed to write a few lines when the game breaks up or does not begin at all. Therefore, the material collected from the H classes becomes a selection of material from among many socio-dramatic games, whereas the material from the L classes was chosen only from the few games which managed to get themselves organized, and are therefore, better than the average level of socio-dramatic play found in the L classes.

We analysed the material gathered by our observers in both sets of classes by sub-dividing it into the following 12 categories; which we shall only name, because of time limits:

A. Themes.

Which themes appear as subjects for dramatic play episodes in the socio-dramatic play of the H and of the L children?

B. Structure and stages of development.

Do children plan socio-dramatic play? How do they plan? How does socio-dramatic play get started and how does it develop stage by stage? Is there any difference among the L and H classes?

C. Toys and other play objects.

Which toys and other play objects do the children use? How do the children exploit these play objects in their socio-dramatic play?

D. Problems which arise in socio-dramatic play and their solutions.

What kinds of problems arise in the process of socio-dramatic play? Which problems do the children raise and how do they solve them?

E. The Leader.

His role in socio-dramatic play, his function and behaviour.

F. Aggression in socio-dramatic play.

Under which circumstances does aggression appear in socio-dramatic play? How is aggression expressed? How do the rest of the children participating in the game react to a show of aggression?

G. Criticism among the children.

What do the children criticize and how do they criticize each other during socio-dramatic play?

H. Humour.

What part does humour play in socio-dramatic play? Under which circumstances and how is humour expressed? How do the children participating in the game react to humour, etc.?

I. Intelligence Quotient and socio-dramatic play.

Do children with higher Intelligence Quotients engage themselves more often in socio-dramatic play? Do they play a more sustained game? Are any special qualities

or behavioural traits conspicuous in the socio-dramatic play of children with higher I.Q.'s that are not apparent in children with lower I.Q.'s?

J. Chronological age and dramatic play.

Are there differences in the socio-dramatic play of children in the 6 year age group, 4 year age group, 2 year age group? If so what are they?

K. Verbalization.

The place and role of discussion and verbalization in socio-dramatic play.

L. Language analysis of verbalization during socio-dramatic play.

A thorough enquiry into the speech pattern and structure of the two groups during socio-dramatic play.

5. AN ATTEMPT TO STUDY THE CAUSES OF THE DIFFERENCE IN LEVEL OF SOCIO-DRAMATIC PLAY OF THE L CHILDREN COMPARED TO THE H CHILDREN BASED ON VISITS TO THE HOMES OF THE CHILDREN AND INTERVIEWS WITH PARENTS OF BOTH GROUPS.

In order to study the causes of the differences we found in the socio-dramatic play of the L children compared with that of the H children, we decided to make home visits, interview parents and carry out observations. We had already visited 60 H families and 60 L families in an effort to see whether perhaps certain ways of growth and development in the immediate

environment of the children could account for this difference. We now revisited these homes with a view to observing the way in which their parents react to them. These observations were made particularly in respect of the socio-dramatic play of the children. As we cannot present here the details; to sum up in short from our observations and interviews we found that the growth and development of a child from the middle higher socio-cultural strata differs in many respects from that of a child from the lower socio-cultural strata. The difference which interests us specifically, from the point of view of this experiment, is that the way of life and process of growth and development in the H homes involve most of the factors which delineate socio-dramatic play. The H home, therefore, furnishes the child with a basis for and practice in, this type of play behaviour even before he reaches nursery and kindergarden. H parents, in fact, teach their children socio-dramatic play insofar as they are willing to enter into the play world of the child; as they consciously teach him and participate with him in his "make-believe"; as they encourage verbalization and themselves serve as rich sources of language patterns to be learnt by the child; as they encourage their child to make and invite friends to play, and so on.

This behaviour pattern and this attitude is not normally found in the daily life of the L home (various reasons for the difference cannot be given here). The L child, therefore, reaches the nursery or kindergarden already deprived of a basis

which the H child enjoys. It is not surprising, then, that L children do not show the ability to participate in socio-dramatic play when they reach nursery or kindergarden, since this ability has never been encouraged and has rarely been developed.

It is our opinion that this deprivation is one of quality rather than quantity. It does not stem from the amount of toys a child may possess, or the amount of conversation a child may have with his parents. It stems mainly from the difference in the quality of the interaction between parent and child, and we assume that this is a deprivation which the nursery and kindergarden can recognize and partly overcome.

6. AN ATTEMPT TO STUDY THE CAUSES OF THE DIFFERENCES IN LEVEL OF SOCIO-DRAMATIC PLAY OF THE L CHILDREN COMPARED TO THE H CHILDREN, BASED ON A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DIFFERENT PLAY-THEORIES.

We made another attempt to study the causes of the difference in the level of socio-dramatic play of the L children compared to the H children, based on a theoretical analysis of the different play theories concerned with dramatic play. We began from the analysis of the theory of play by Schiller in his book "Letters in aesthetic education in 1795, through the theories of play by Spenser, Gross, Stenly-Hall, Buhler, Psychoanalytic theories of play, Lewenfeld, Susan Eiseks, Piaget and others.

Because of the time limit I cannot present to you in any detail this analysis. Although the differences between these theories of play are big, there is one single similarity among all of them; mainly their assumption that the development of play in children is a "natural" process and that all children play dramatic and socio-dramatic play.

As no one of these theories mentions a possibility that a certain large group of children does not play socio-dramatic play because of certain environmental or other reasons, we could not receive from the analysis of all the theories an answer or a cue to the causes of the differences in the level of socio-dramatic play of our L children compared to the H children.

So we had to begin building propositions toward a theory of socio-dramatic play, which includes and explains also the play behaviour of large groups of our L children.

7. PROPOSITIONS TOWARD A THEORY OF SOCIO-DRAMATIC PLAY:

We propose that dramatic play in children two to seven years old, is caused and motivated mainly by identification-naimly by the need of the children to model themselves in thought, feeling and action after . adults (mainly their parents) and to try to be like them as exactly as possible in as many respects as possible.

There is an inconsistency and lack of unanimity in the usage of the term identification, which is probably used in more different senses than any other psychoanalytic term. See Freud, Bronfenbrunner, Parsons, Mowrer, Slater, Mussen, Ausubel, Miller and Dallard and others. Some of these theorists and researchers approach identification from the clasical psychoanalytical approach; others from an orientation of social learning theory and still others from a dynamically oriented theory.

What seems important and relevant to the topic we are concerned with is, that they all agree that identification is a fundamental concept that generally inplies that a child gives its allegiance to its parent and attempts to duplicate in its own life the ideals, attitudes and behavior of the parent with whom he is identifying. We propose that this motive or need to identify or to model oneself after the parent, which is found to some extent in every infant, is the main cause and motivation of dramatic play in pre-school children.

We further propose that identification with the parent at the pre-school age, is not only identification with him as an individual model. At this age of the child, the parent serves also as a representative of identification with social norms and as a sex role model.

Limitation: In order to satisfy (fulfill) this motive or need of identification with the parent's image, the child immitates this image. This immitation according to our view is only a mean which helps the child to fulfill his need of identification. It seems important to us to make clear the distinction between identification and immitation. The two are related, but identification is a predominantly unconscious process. There may be moments at recognition of its existence, but its most important aspects develop outside awareness. Limitation, on the other hand, is chiefly a conscious mechanism or behavior. The core of the concept of identification is a motive to become like another person, than the imitation is only a by product, a tool, rather then an essential feature of the phenomenon.

We propose that dramatic play is the childs' imitation of his parents and other adults. He plays the role of his parents' image as it exists in his memory. He tries to imitate and play this image so that there be as small a difference as possible between him, playing the role in the dramatic-play and the behavior of the adult with whom he identifies and whose role he tries to play. The more similar he feels and believes, he is to the

adult he identifies with, the greater is his satisfaction

Socio-dramatic play: Till the age of about three years, dramatic play is the child's imitation of the parent's single act's as a means of identification, while between the age of three and seven years, it is the child's imitations of the parent's interaction with others as a means of identification; hence socio-dramatic play. In other words, till the age of about three years the child perceives his parents' behavior as a group of single acts, while from the age of three years and till about 7 years the child realizes that the thought, feeling and action of the parent whom he imitates is not a group of single acts, he perceives now the reactions of his parent to other people's thoughts, feelings and actions, he perceives the interactions among people and tries to imitate it. At this stage the child reaches the socio-dramatic level of play in which social contacts with other children is required. He needs other children to ineract with in his play in order to fulfill his need to imitate as exactly as possible his parent's actions and reactions to other adults. During the socio-dramatic play there is a constant comparison and criticism made by the children on the play which they are creating, with what they remember of "real life." Also the main conflicts and criticism between the participants, usually revolve around comparisons between the different "realities" as the different children know and remember, on the one hand, and the demands of the game and individual needs of the children participating, on the other. So we do not visualize socio-dramatic play as a form of

retreat from reality or as a means of escape. The more adequate explanation to us would appear to be that the young children engage in dramatic play as means of coming as close to the adult world of "reality" as they possibly can. They are not running away from but are confronting the world within their own capabilities. The child tries in socio-dramatic play to adopt his ego to the adult world. He does not try to change the adult world in such a way that will suit his ego.

The toys and other play objects: Although a specific toy may stimulate a desire to play a certain role, the child does not undertake a role in socio-dramatic play in order to use a certain toy or in order to engage in a specific motor activity. The child plays a role in order to enact a certain social role selected from the adult world, as he remembers that role. He invites other children and they also join for the sake of the social theme which they plan and develop together. Since the children attack their main signficance to the verisimilitude of their actions with the preconceived plan of their dramatic play, the toys they look for must support, suit and be expressive of this plan. They must be either toys which are a miniature replica of the real article they represent from the adult world; or un-defined play objects which exact color, size, etc. are less important, but it is essential that they lend themselves suitably to the preconceived play theme. The amount or quantity of toys does not influence the social-dramatic play.

The children do not rely totally on the actual toy or play object which they employ to express a certain function. While using the toy they also verbalize continuously and explain the function of the toy and the reason for their manipulation of it. With time and experience in socio-dramatic play, the children rely less and less on the actual object and become more and more adept in conceptualizing that object, they frequently employ words as satisfactory substitutes for objects, situations and actions.

It may be of interest, that when a toy is a minature replica of a <u>real</u> article, the child is as it were, forced to use it according to the laws of usage in the adult world. Therefore children often find it more convenient to choose less well-defined play objects which they are not "forced" to imitate the adults while using them and therefore the same toy may serve several purposes within the framework of their play theme.

<u>Pre-school children need help from adults in their developmental processes of identification, imitation and socio-dramatic play</u>: On the basis of our observations of socio-dramatic play in pre-school children and ways of growth and development in their homes, we view the developmental process of identification, imitation and socio-dramatic play in pre-school, as a learning process which without active influence by external adult stimuli will not

develop to a level which will enable these children socio-dramatic play.

The motive to identify gives rise to behavior in which the child tries to imitate and act like another person (the parent), but on the basis of our study we cannot agree with Sears and others, that such learned activity (imitation) can be distinguished from conventional learning by the absence of specific training. We assume that the fact that the children reached a maturational level in which the need to identify with their parents motivates imitation of their parent's behavior, will not develop the children's ability of imitation and socio-dramatic play without specific help and reinforcement from adults in four main areas:

1. Understanding their parents' behavior.

2. Harmonious emotional relationship with the parent whom they identify with and try to imitate.

3. Reinforcement of their imitative behavior by adults.

4. Knowledge and experience with the major rules and factors included in socio-dramatic play.

We cannot agree with the wide-spread belief in Israel and abroad, that children given the "right conditions" in nurseries and kindergardens, i.e. toys, suitable playing space, time and freedom from interference, will "naturally" engage in socio-dramatic play. The "conditions" in the majority of the L kindergardens in Israel are not significantly different from the "conditions" in the H kindergardens. Yet, it is a fact, that the

majority of the L children do not engage in socio-dramatic play.

We must reject the belief, widely accepted in Israel, and abroad, that adult intervention in a child's dramatic play activities is highly undesirable. It is believed nowadays that the adult should not participate actively in any way in the children's "artistic" dramatic play other than providing the child with toys, space and other materials needed. We assume that growth is not enough, nor passive environment and "conditions" enough. Unless the teacher or other adult is considered an active part of the environment, the children will make no progress in their ability to participate in socio-dramatic play.

We assume that carefully planned and controlled adult intervention in certain aspects of socio-dramatic play of pre-school children, will have a positive effect on their socio-dramatic development. The intervention of the teacher through suggestions and comments related to dramatic play, are fertile stimulants which will make the children conscious of different qualities and possibilities in socio-dramatic play and in their ability to draw from their memory different experiences and use them in their play. In this way the teacher actually encourages and helps (the child) to do what he the child wants to do, instead of leaving him faced with the immense problem of solving all tasks alone and unaided.

8. SOCIO-DRAMATIC PLAY AS A PREPARATION FOR THE SCHOOL SITUATION

From our observations of socio-dramatic play we became aware of the great similarity between the patterns of behavior which advance the successful participation of children in socio-dramatic play and those patterns of behavior necessary to successful integration into the school situation, or full co-operation in the "school game."

Problem-solving in school subjects requires a great deal of "make-believe" (e.g. how Eskimos live, dramatic stories in reading, imagining a story to write, solving a complex arithmetic problem); geography is make-believe, history is make-believe, literature is make-believe - all are conceptual constructions which the child has not sensuously experienced.

"Problems" are conceptual conditions in which it is necessary to project oneself if one is to act from there and solve the problem. Having learned to sense conceptual conditions as satisfying grounds for action, the child can accept the teacher's requirement for again submitting himself to the harness of conceptualized forms and operate from there. He has then internalized a condition in which he can "learn" more readily and from which he derives a certain satisfaction.

It is our considered opinion that a child's participation in socio-dramatic play is a stimulating factor towards the development of interpersonal and inter-social relationships, towards the absorption of knowledge and towards the achievement of behaviour patterns necessary to the child in order to enable him to exploit to the full the possibilities which schooling and the school situation offers him.

On the basis of a detailed analysis of our reports we formulated 16 generalizations of action and reaction which, in our opinion, operate in the socio-dramatic play situation. The child who participates in a great deal of socio-dramatic play, thereby activating these behavior patterns, is, according to our assumption better equipped for and more successfully assimilated into the school situation.

1. Through his participation in socio-dramatic play the child learns to stand up under the criticism of the group, since unless he is able to do so, he cannot participate in the socio-dramatic play of the group. This is reason enough for him to accept criticism, to learn from it and to change his behaviour because of it. The criticism is "operationally effective."

2. Through his participation in socio-dramatic play the child learns to control himself in relation to his own internalized sense of evolving order. Playing the role means receiving cues from the environment, reforming them into his own vision of action, then acting. By performing within this 'feed-back' system, the child senses himself as central to the ordering of his own world and his ability to control his behavior develops accordingly.

3. Through his participation in socio-dramatic play the child learns to observe reality (observe his surroundings) with a view to the future utilization of these observations in relation to himself. The environment has active value for him. Successful socio-dramatic play calls for meaningful interaction with the environment, both as an observer of it and as an actor affecting it. This heightened perception continues as a need even when the socio-dramatic play is at an end for the child knows that he must be able to draw upon his observations of the adult world as his source of authority when he wants to convince the others of the validity of his performance.

4. Through his participation in socio-dramatic play the child learns flexibility in his approach to various situations. The other children tend to use approaches different from his which still prove fruitfully relevant to the play situation. Socio-dramatic play channels attention to the inner world of others who form their actions from their own frame of reference within the limits of the play episode. Each child, actor himself, needs to learn to respond to the various forms of experiencing of the other actors. This is basic to socio-dramatic play; flexibility is a requirement.

5. Through his participation in socio-dramatic play the child learns new concepts (as well as new approaches). He soon realizes that the concept of 'father', for example, can include behaviour patterns not necessarily part of his own father's behaviour pattern. The concept of father, therefore, expands and re-forms. The role is generously enough proportioned to invite many inclusions, re-formations and enrichment.

6. Through his participation in socio-dramatic play the child learns to develop towards advanced stages of abstract thought. He may begin with a toy and be wholly dependent upon it to relate him securely to his role. After a while, (because the rapidity of spontaneous play and its growing complexity requires it) he is able to pretend that he has the toy in hand and act accordingly. Still later, he is able to use the word only without adding explanations.

7. Through his participation in socio-dramatic play the child learns to generalize. We mean here that particular thought process of movement from the particular and limited to the general and more inclusive. It is one of the familiar aims of education and is clearly present as an intrinsic requisite of socio-dramatic play.

8. Through his participation in socio-dramatic play the child learns to concentrate, which means to keep himself "centred in the togetherness" offered by the given limits of the play episode. When a child loses his concentration he loses his grip on and his relation to the play episode; the other children will then demand his ejection on the grounds of his deviation from the agreed play presumptions. Concentration, then is enforced by the child's peers, not by a parent or teacher or other adult. Since

other children seem able to concentrate in this way, the child has cause to believe that he too, can do the same. The discipline is, therefore, 'natural' in socio-dramatic play. Concentration is essential to socio-dramatic play which encourages its development.

9. Through his participation in socio-dramatic play the child learns that he sets his own standards for his actions; that the other children do the same and that satisfaction comes when each uses his own standards which subsequently re-enforces the standards of others. In other words, the individuality of each is to be respected and individual fulfillment depends both upon a sensitive respect for the individuality of others, and upon a common operation in which all can participate and be rewarded. Socio-dramatic play as a psychological form is an effort to blendinto a mutual meaning both the individual, qua individual, and society, as a systematic form of individual responsiveness.

10. Through his participation in socio-dramatic play the child learns to discern and enact the <u>central</u> characteristic of the role, (its <u>major</u> features, its <u>main</u> theme). If the child does not project the

'essence' of his role, he is criticized by his peers and the role may be taken from him. When a child is given the role of kindergarden teacher, for example, it is not enough that she just initate the activities of the teacher, but she must also project the necessary 'teacher attitude' in as broad a range as possible. Detail, as much, is not insisted upon, but the main feeling of the theme, the essence, is required. This means that the child is required. (1) to thoroughly understand the theme, (2) to imagine the role as he intends to perform it, (3) to compare the role as he imagines it with the role as actually performed by adults in the real world, and, (4) to limit and select his actions in order to clearly portray the main characteristics of his role. He cannot let it become vaguely cluttered up with detail or distorted through irrelevant excursions.

11. The child gets better in socio-dramatic play as his experience in it accumulates. As he undertakes different roles in different settings, he grows in his capacity to respond. As he plays with different actors, he gets acquainted with the different interpretations which the different actors give the 'same role.'

As he plays the same role with the same actors on different occasions, each play episode is spontaneously formed and therefore new in some respects. The form of socio-dramatic play allows him to absorb these fresh inclusions which enrich his capacity to sense the main themes and the range of possible variations on them.

12. Through his participation in socio-dramatic play the child learns to see the context in which his action has relevance, and to discipline his own actions in relation to that context. A child, for example, playing at being a driver may fall and hurt himself. He wants to cry but he knows that a driver would not cry, so he controls his impulsive reactions, (crying) in order to remain inside the role and thereby sustain the play episode. Or, he sees a little girl playing at ironing clothes; he too wants to iron; she says "no" because only mothers iron; he accepts this argument as valid within the socio-dramatic play requirements. This self-discipline grows out of his own understanding and is of his own choice. It is also a social discipline since he is learning to adjust himself to the requirements of the social setting.

13. Through his participation in socio-dramatic play the child is learning how it feels to be a "creator". He experiences himself as a creative being, forming his personal response to the world from his position in it and experiencing the world as a place responsive to, and inviting of, his creation. He gets both the intrinsic satisfactions and the extrinsic reward for being creative.

14. Through his participation in socio-dramatic play the child learns vicariously from the experience and knowledge of other children. A "policeman" refuses to help a "mother" to cross the road on the grounds that he is a prison policeman whose job is at a goal and not on the street as a traffic policeman. The girl had not known that policemen worked in jails, she gained this new insight vicariously.

15. Through his participation in socio-dramatic play the child learns to concentrate on specific problem for a longer period of time because the other children in the group are busy with the problem for a longer period of time. Thus he learns to see a problem from several points of view, and not just one, as he did when he concentrated on it for a shorter time, alone.

16. Socio-dramatic play helps the child develop from a preponderantly egocentric being into a being capable of co-operation and social interaction. When several children play together their interaction and mutual help promote constant progress in their work, thus, they do not remain at the same level of self-expression but are constantly learning to expand and exploit their individual possibilities.

We assume that children denied the opportunity to learn socio-dramatic play would have less chance to learn how to accept a problematic world, for they would not be able to sense the relevance or value of problems and would have no way of taking hold of what schooling offers. Such a child, when he did get a start in grasping a problem, would lack sustaining power, not knowing how to hold his "role in the play," his place in the conceptual structure, and would make "mistakes." "Mistakes" are items taken amiss, that is, outside the provisions offered by the problem, (outside the role). Making mistakes he would see himself as less able than others to do what seems rewarded. Lacking reward, and repeatedly lacking in reward, he would come to generalize that he is not able "to play the game," and he would be right. He lacks the generalized capacity to reach for conceptual structures and to operate from within their implicit limits.

It is our contention, and one that deserves further exploration and research, that the more a child engages in socio-dramatic play, the readier he is to participate in the "school-game."

9. ON THE BASIS OF THE DIFFERENCES WE FOUND IN OUR OBSERVATIONS, BETWEEN THE SOCIO-DRAMATIC PLAY OF THE L CHILDREN COMPARED WITH THAT OF THE H CHILDREN, AND ON THE BASIS OF THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT WAYS AS RELATED TO PLAY OF THE L PARENTS COMPARED WITH THAT OF THE H PARENTS, WE PROPOUNDED 15 ASSUMPTIONS IN AN EFFORT TO GENERALIZE AND EXPLAIN THE PHENOMENON.

On these assumptions we based our hypotheses of an experiment to try to develop the ability of L children to play socio-dramatic play and to measure if and how will their socio-dramatic play promote cognitive abilties, impart basic information and modify attitudes.

We tested our hypotheses on four groups of kindergardens: three experimental and one control group. Each experimental and control group comprised four kindergardens: two pre-school kindergardens with children aged 5-6 years, and two kindergardens with children aged 3-5 years. The sum total of children in the 12 experimental classes was 420 children.

When forming the experimental and control groups, both inter-group correspondence and pair correspondence was sought through the following five factors. 1) Age of the child, 2) Sex, 3) Parents' country of origin, 4) Family socio-cultural standard (parents education, father's occupation, number of children in family; and amount of living space), 5) Intelligence quotient of the child (Stanford-Binet).

The three main hypotheses on which the three experimental groups were based, were:

The First Hypothesis--First experimental group

The inadequacy of the dramatic play of the L children stems from the externalization of their impressions and experiences. These children look but do not see, more important, they do not understand. Because they receive no explanation which would broaden their impressions and make them more meaningful, these impressions remain superficial and uneffective as stimuli for dramatic play. If we provide these children with meaningful impressions within their comprehension, they will begin to engage in dramatic play.

The Second Hypothesis--Second experimental group

The L children absorb the impressions and experiences afforded them by their immediate environment. They understand what they see and experience. These are deeply impressed upon

the minds of the children. They are not taught, however, by the adults in their immediate environment, how to translate these impressions and experiences into the language of play. If we teach these children how to exploit their impressions and experiences; how to convert them into play, their resources will be enriched and they will begin to engage in dramatic play.

The Third Hypothesis--Third experimental group.

The inadequacy of the dramatic play of the L children is the result of the lack of two interdependent factors: Lack of meaningful impressions and experiences together with lack of teaching and guidance in playing. If these two factors are both present in the kindergarden situation, the children will begin to engage in dramatic play.

An improvement will be noted among the L children of the three experimental groups when compared to the L control group, in their ability of socio-dramatic play and in the development of their linguistic standards nearer to those achieved by the H children.

The change was measured in the following areas:

I. The children's ability to engage in dramatic play was evaluated on the basis of five factors.
   A. ability to identify with a role
   B. ability to participate in a play episode with a group of children (two at least)

C. Ability to put aside reality in regard to an object, character situation, and become involved in the play reality using "imaginative make-believe"

D. Ability to consistently participate in a group game for at least five minutes

E. Ability to say a few words demonstrating active participation

II. The children's linguistic ability was evaluated on the basis of five factors:

A. Fluency of speech

B. Length of utterance

C. Length of sentence

D. Parts of speech

E. Contexual words (kind of words used in discussion within the play context)

Main Results:

1. No significant difference occured in the children's ability to engage in socio-dramatic play and in their linguistic ability in the First Experimental Group, in which the children were provided with meaningful impressions only, when compared with the two other experimental and with the control group.

2. A significant improvement occured in the children's ability to engage in dramatic play, in the Second Experimental Group, in which the children were taught how to convert their impressions and experiences into socio-dramatic play, when compared with the First Experimental Group and with the control group. No significant improvement occured in the linguistic ability of this group as compared with the three others.
3. A significant improvement occured in the children's ability to engage in socio-dramatic play and in some factors of their linguistic ability, in the Third Experimental Group, in which the children were provided with meaningful impressions and experiences and also were thought how to convert their impressions and experiences into socio-dramatic play, when compared with the two other experimental groups and with the control group.